

**University of California Perspectives on Immigrant Integration  
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**I. Introduction**

I have been asked to discuss the challenges of integrating immigrants into California's society and economy and the ways that the University of California is influencing integration of immigrants. Today I would like to focus on two major roles that the University of California plays in this effort:

1. One role involves the expansion of opportunities to ensure that all of California's citizens who are qualified have the opportunity for a higher education, and
2. The second involves assisting state policymakers to make informed state policy decisions related to health care, education, social services, and the like.

**II. Expanding opportunities for higher education to all California citizens**

Today, my comments will focus on two of the greatest challenges relating to immigrants: access to a quality K-12 education and opportunities for higher education. All California's children deserve these. However, because these new Californians are diverse, tend to speak languages other than English at home, and often have limited experience with education, especially with higher education, it is a particular challenge for our state.

As the land grant university for California and as the state's research institution, UC has an obligation to ensure that the state's population has opportunities for educational advancement -- kindergarten through graduate and professional school -- and to ensure that the state has a well educated cadre of professionals in the workforce to ensure the economic strength of the state. UC also has a moral obligation to help the state strengthen the quality of its educational programs. Beyond that, it is in UC's self-interest: these new Californians as well as others from a diverse number of groups are our future students. UC's future undergraduates must be well prepared for undertaking a college education, and it is essential that the diverse perspectives of the state's population be represented on our 10 campuses.

Proposition 209 and earlier Regental actions in the mid-to-late 1990's eliminated considerations of race and ethnicity from admissions decisions. These actions forced UC to re-think its efforts to create an undergraduate population that reflects of the state's population and to help the state provide a high quality education at the pre-collegiate level, particularly for students from groups that traditionally have not benefited from higher education. We found that the largest proportion of educationally disadvantaged students -- the students most reflective of California's rapidly changing population and those most likely to be from immigrant families -- are in high schools in low income areas of the state and in schools whose students score in the lowest two quintiles on the SAT, schools that typically send few of their graduates to college, much less to UC.

Although there is common agreement that California's children deserve a rich educational experience during the K-12 years, schools in low-income areas of the state -- schools in which many immigrant

children find themselves – tend to have teachers who are not credentialed or who are not certified to teach in their subject areas. These schools often lack up-to-date facilities and equipment, particularly in the sciences. Often these high schools are unable to provide the full complement of college preparation courses for UC and CSU, much less the honors and AP courses that make students competitively eligible with their peers in more advantaged schools. Consequently, the University of California is working with our K-12 colleagues in a number of different areas. I will mention a few key areas.

1. Academic preparation, creation of a college-going culture, and recruitment. One of our goals is to increase the numbers of UC-eligible students from low-income groups that are not typically oriented toward college. Because so few students from these schools have been eligible for UC in the past, the Regents have asked UC to double the number of eligible high school graduates from schools whose students scored in the two lowest quintiles on the SAT.

We have a number of efforts to create a college-going culture among such students. Programs like Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement (MESA), UC's Early Education Outreach Program (EAOP), and the Puente Program have been substantially expanded and are targeting these schools. These programs counsel middle and high school students to take appropriate courses and tests and encouraging them to make high grades to become competitively eligible for admission to the University of California. Such programs are also working with the parents to help them understand issues around college preparation. Part of this effort involves providing information in various languages to help students and their families begin planning early for college. Another important systemwide effort is the UC College Prep Program, for which the UC Santa Cruz campus has taken the lead. This program provides online Advanced Placement courses and honors courses to students in schools that are unable to provide them. In a related initiative UC has also agreed to accept the top 4 percent of UC-qualified high school graduates in an effort to make college a reality for more of the students from low income areas.

2. School/University Partnerships to enhance academic preparation for all children. In an effort to strengthen the quality of education from kindergarten-through-twelfth grade in low-income areas, UC campuses have begun forming long-term partnerships with schools. So far our campuses are collaborating with over 70 high schools in low-income areas and over 150 feeder middle and elementary schools. These are but a small percentage of all the 8000 schools in the state. However, developing long-term intensive partnerships with this many schools represents an unparalleled effort for the University of California to help turn around some of the schools that have not been doing well.

3. Teacher preparation and professional development. Teachers are integral to educational reform. The most significant part of UC's focus on teachers is in the area of professional development for practicing teachers. The University is managing for the state a complement of teacher professional development programs called the California Subject Matter Projects and the California Professional Development Institutes. While these programs are designed to serve all teachers in the state, those programs located on UC campuses are working closely with their campuses' partner schools and other schools in low-income areas. An important focus involves helping teachers improve the English language skills of immigrant children. Although our teacher education programs remain small, the University is also expanding its teacher preparation programs to help the state address the high demand for well-qualified teachers able to teach diverse groups of students.

4. Community college/transfer outreach. The University's Outreach efforts also involve strengthening our ties with community colleges in areas near our partner schools. Many immigrant and other students from low-income areas embark on their first college experience at a local community

college. Thus, UC is working to increase the numbers of community college transfer students to our campuses. Puente and other outreach programs are targeting these colleges to ensure that students are aware of their options to transfer and that they prepare well and appropriately to do so.

5. Graduate outreach. Part of ensuring that the state has a diverse and well-educated citizenry involves making sure that future professionals are well trained. In this regard, UC's outreach efforts also extend to addressing graduate and professional education. One goal is to identify and attract California State University graduates to graduate and professional schools on UC campuses through programs, such as UC LEADS.

### **III. Providing resources to assist the state in making informed state policy decisions related to health care, education, social services, and the like.**

In the time I have left, I would like to turn to another way that the University of California works to influence immigrant integration. As the designated research institution for the state, the University of California has a wide array of policy research efforts in this area.

1. Policy research. A number of policy oriented research centers on UC campuses and in the Office of the President address immigrant issues. These include the California Policy Research Center housed in the Office of the President, the Linguistic Minority Research Center on the Santa Barbara Campus, the Center for Immigration Studies on the San Diego Campus, and UC Mexus on the Riverside Campus. They publish briefings on relevant topics related to educational, social, health, and economic issues related to immigrants, and we can provide these reports to the Commissioners.

2. Research on educational outreach issues. More specifically related to our educational outreach efforts to K-12 is the UC All Campus Collaborative on Outreach Research, and Dissemination (UCACCORD) program. This new research center will be encouraging faculty researchers to help the University and others in the state understand the underlying causes of educational problems, among them issues related to immigration such as language.

### **IV. Conclusion**

In conclusion, while we see the infusion of new talent as a strength for our state, we are nonetheless aware of the significant challenges our state faces in educating and incorporating these new residents. The University of California is committed to working with others in the state to ensure that these new Californians have access to high quality education and to benefit from and contribute to the society and economy of our state.